

I would like to share with you my statement from the Congressional Record commending foreign assistance efforts in Haiti. Thousands of soldiers, doctors, aid workers, volunteers and donations from everyday Americans have helped turn what was an unprecedented disaster into a glowing example of human stewardship:

*Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend the compassionate work of the tens of thousands members of the U.S. armed forces, federal agencies, NGOs, international organizations, and volunteers on the ground providing direct assistance to the people of Haiti. Our brothers and sisters from the island nation of Haiti are facing an unimaginable human catastrophe as the country works to recover from the magnitude-7 earthquake that struck on January 12, 2010, the largest recorded in Haiti in over a century. By providing critical services ranging from emergency medical care and food distribution to helping maintain security, these men and women represent the best of the humanitarian character and make us all proud.*

*It is prudent, then, that we match their bravery and selflessness in the epicenter of the disaster with a compassionate, multi-pronged response. President Obama quickly brought the focus of the relevant federal agencies onto Haiti, and Congress has acted swiftly to encourage the American people to contribute to the effort by passing H.R. 4462, which would allow taxpayers to deduct charitable cash donations for the relief of victims of this tragic event on their 2009 income tax returns.*

*Further, I recognize that the Government of Haiti cannot afford to invest in humanitarian relief, reconstruction, and development efforts, while continuing to make payments on debts owed to multilateral financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank. Even before the earthquake, debt service payments to these institutions were a tremendous burden that interfered with the ability of the Government of Haiti to meet the needs of its people. For this reason, I have long been supporter of efforts to cancel Haiti's debts owed to these multilateral financial institutions, and I have reiterated my call*

## Assistance to Haiti

Written by Mike Honda

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*for debt cancellation in the wake of the earthquake. In addition, many of my colleagues and I have joined the effort to extend temporary protected status to Haitian nations who are currently in the U.S. so that they can assist their fellow countrymen and women through remittances and other support.*

*The effect of the earthquake on Haiti is reflected not only in the thousands of buildings destroyed, but more accurately in the cost of human lives and families devastated. According to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "[o]f Haiti's 9 million people, initial reports suggest roughly a third may be affected by the disaster." The international humanitarian and security response has already provided much needed shelter, food, and medical support. As these initial efforts unfold, the need expands into maintaining security, reestablishing the democratically elected government, and providing sustainable services to people of Haiti. To help fulfill this need, I am a proud cosponsor of the Next Steps for Haiti Act (H.R. 417). Introduced by my dear friend Congresswoman Barbara Lee, H.R. 417 would support the capacity building efforts by the Haitian government and civil society, supporting President Obama's commitment to support the people of Haiti in their efforts to not only recover from this human catastrophe but also to hold on to and work hard toward their vision of a strong economy and democracy.*

*Once again, Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues in expressing my condolences to the victims' families, both here at home and on the island, and encourage all Americans to help in Haiti's rescue, recovery and empowerment.*